

Message Text

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ACTION H-03

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AMEMBASSY JIDDA
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AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: OREP (STONE, RICHARD)
SUBJECT: SENATOR STONE'S CONVERSATION WITH FONMIN KHADDAM AND
PEOPLES' COUNCIL SPEAKER HALABI

1. SUMMARY:

FONMIN KHADDAM AND PEOPLES' COUNCIL SPEAKER HALABI
REITERATED TO CODEL SYRIAN DESIRE FOR PEACE, BUT ASSERTED
THAT RECENT ISRAELI ELECTION HAD PUT NEW IMPEDIMENT IN
PATH OF ATTAINING NEGOTIATING PROCESS. FONMIN KHADDAM
SAID THAT INTERNATIONAL OPTIMISM REGARDING OPPORTUNITY FOR
SETTLEMENT HAD BEEN GENERATED BY ARAB MODERATION, BUT HE
CAUTIONED THAT ARAB STATES MUST NOT BE PRESSED TO EXCEED THEIR
PRESENT MODERATE POSTURES. SENATOR STONE CONVEYED TO THEM
HIS IMPRESSION THAT INCOMING ISRAELI LEADERS WERE ENERGETIC
GROUP WHICH WANTED BE ABLE TO DIMINISH ISRAELI DEPENDENCE ON
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U.S. HE SAID THEY WOULD BE TOUGH NEGOTIATORS BUT WAS HOPEFUL
THAT CHANCE STILL EXISTED FOR PEACE AGREEMENT BASED UPON
SECURITY FOR ISRAELIS AND DIGNITY FOR PALESTINIANS. HE
COUNSELLED ARABS TO BE PATIENT IN SEARCH FOR PEACE AND TO
ESCHEW IMPOSING DEADLINES. END SUMMARY:

2. CODEL MET SEPARATELY JUNE 6 WITH FONMIN KHADDAM AND SPEAKER

OF PEOPLES' COUNCIL MUHAMMAD ALI AL-HALABI. OPEN-
ING WITH HIS WELL-KNOWN TECHNIQUE OF TRYING TO CATCH HIS
INTELOCUTOR OFF BALANCE, KHADDAM ASKED STONE HOW HE FOUND
CONDITIONS IN "OCCUPIED PALESTINE," I.E., ISRAEL. FONMIN
THEN QUICKLY MOVED FROM CONVEYING HIS APPRECIATION OF
PRESIDENT CARTER AS A "SMART, ACTIVE, AND EFFECTIVE LEADER"
INTO PROBING "HOW FAR HE WILL USE HIS EFFECTIVENESS WITH
BEGIN." SENATOR STONE RESPONDED THAT CARTER WAS PROMPTED
BY LONG-RANGE GOALS AND WOULD NOT BE DISTRACTED BY EPHEMERAL
CONSIDERATIONS. "CARTER WILL DO WELL PERSONALLY WITH BEGIN,"
STONE PREDICTED. ASKED FOR HIS GENERAL VIEW ON INCOMING
ISRAELI ADMINISTRATION, SENATOR ASSERTED THAT NEW GROUP IS
ENERGETIC AND DESIROUR OF REMOLDING ISRAEL INTO SOCIETY
MORE FITTING WITH THE PIONEER SPIRIT--LESS DEPENDENT ON WELFARE
PROGRAMS AND MORE REFLECTIVE OF HARD-WORK ETHIC. THEY WANTED
TO INCREASE THEIR ABILITY TO BE LESS DEPENDENT UPON U.S.
FINANCIAL SUPPORT. SENATOR SAW RENEWED ENERGY IN THEIR
APPROACH TO FOREIGN POLICY, AND NOTED "THEY HAVE A MEASURE
OF SELF-CONTROL" WHICH HE HAD NOT ASSUMED PRIOR TO HIS ARRIVAL
THERE. REGARDING PEACE PROCESS, SENATOR STATED "THEY WILL BE
THOUGH NEGOTIATORS," BUT ELECTORAL VICTORS SUPPORTED BY
YOUNDER LEADERS WHO WANT TO FIND "NEW WAYS TO BE PART OF THE
MIDDLE EAST." KHADDAM REPLIED THAT LESS ISRAELI DEPENDENCY
UPON U.S. WOULD SOLVE "FOUR-FIFTHS OF OUR PROBLEMS WITH THE
U.S." HOWEVER, HE EXPRESSED SKEPTICISM THAT ISRAELIS REALLY
DESIRED LESS DEPENDENCE UPON U.S. FINANCIAL AND MILITARY
SUPPORT.

3. ASKED ABOUT INCOMING ISRAELI GOVERNMENT'S VIEWS ON
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PALESTINIAN ISSUE, STONE ASSERTED THAT POSTURES REMAINED
GENERAL BECAUSE OF ONGOING COALITION NAGOTIATIONS BUT COULD
BE SUMMARIZED AS ATTEMPT TO ATTAIN TWO GOALS: FIRST WAS SAFETY
FOR ISRAELIS, AND SECOND WAS DIGNITY AND PRIDE FOR PALES-
TINIANS, WIHTOUT WHICH THERE WOULD NOT BE END TO TURMOIL.
ISRAELIS WANT TO RECONCILE SAFETY FOR THEMSELVES WITH DIGNITY
FOR PALESTINIANS. PRESIDENT CARTER ALSO WANTS DIGNITY FOR
PALESTINAINS.

4. DISCUSSION ABOUT SEMANTIC AND PRACTICAL DIFFERENCES
BETWEEN CONCEPTS OF "SECURITY" AND "SAFETY" FOR ISRAELIS
HELPED LAUNCH FONMIN INTO LENGTHY ANALYSIS OF ISRAELI
OCCUPATION POLICY. IN KHADDAM'S VIEW, ISRAELIS SENSE OF
SAFETY WAS IN INVERSE RATION TO AMOUNT OF 1967 ARAB TERRITORY
THEY OCCUPIED. IN 1967 THEY OCCUPIED GOLAN HEIGHTS BECAUSE
THEY SAID SYRIANS FORCES OVERLOOKED HULEH PLAIN. "NOW
ISRAELIS ARE BUILDING NEW SETTLEMENTS NEAR CEASE-FIRE LINES.
SHORTLY THEY WILL WANT NEW TERRITORY TO PROTECT THESE SETTLE-
MENTS. IF THEY ARE SERIOUS ABOUT PEACE, THEY MUST WITHDRAW

FROM EVERY INCH OF TERRITORY OCCUPIED IN 1967. OCCUPATION AND PEACE CANNOT GO TOGETHER." BUT WITHDRAWAL WAS ONLY PART OF PEACE PROCESS; OTHER PART WAS PALESTINIANS. "THE PALESTINIANS MUST HAVE A HOMELAND." KHADDAM ASSERTED. THE LEBANESE EVENTS WOULD NOT HAVE OCCURRED IF THIS CONDITION HAD BEEN MET PREVIOUSLY. ISRAELIS MUST NOT EXPEL PEOPLE FROM THEIR HOMES, BUT LEARN TO LIVE WITH THEM. "ISRAEL MUST PROPOSE BASIC SOLUTIONS TO SOLVE ROOTS OF THE PROBLEM. WE ARABS WANT PEACE, BUT PEACE PROCESS CANNOT BE UNILATERAL. PEACE MUST BE JUST, STABLE AND LASTING AND MUST ELIMINATE INJUSTICE AND OPPRESSION." ISRAELIS CLAIM THEY ARE AFRAID, BUT WHAT DO THEY FEAR? THEY HAVE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES TEN TIMES GREATER THAN SIZE OF ISRAEL IN 1948. FEAR IS PRETEXT TO AROUSE SYMPATHY AMONG "SOME CIRCLES IN CERTAIN COUNTRIES." FONMIN REITERATED THAT, "ONE OF OUR BASIC POLICIES IS TO ESTABLISH JUST PEACE."

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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
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5. SENATOR TOLD KHADDAM HE WOULD CONVEY LATTER'S WORDS, BUT ADDED THAT "WE CANNOT ADEQUATELY CONVEY THE FORCE AND SINCERITY OF YOUR FEELINGS. WHEN YOU POSE YOUR QUESTIONS DIRECTLY TO ISRAELIS, YOU WILL RECEIVE BETTER ANSWERS BECAUSE THEY WILL FEEL YOUR SINCERITY." FONMIN REPLIED THAT PROBLEM WAS NOT WHO WOULD REPLY, WHETHER U.S. OR ISRAEL, BECAUSE FACTS OF CONFLICT WERE "SELF-EXPLANATORY." HE SAW NO INDICATION THAT ISRAEL WAS PREPARING SERIOUS MOVE TO

ATTAIN JUST PEACE. ON CONTRARY, INTERNATIONAL OPTIMISM THAT PEACE POSSIBLE WAS DUE TO "MODERATE ARAB ATTITUDE. ARABS HAVE EXPRESSED UNEXPECTED MODERATION, BUT IN RETURN ISRAELIS HAVE SHOWN NOTHING TO INDICATE THEY WANT PEACE. YOU HAVE GIVEN ME NOTHING IN YOUR IMPRESSIONS INDICATING THAT ISRAEL IS READY TO WITHDRAW." KHADDAM THEN REAFFIRMED SYRIAN DESIRE THAT GENEVA MEPC BE CONVENED WITHIN CONTEXT OF UN RESOLUTIONS ON ME CONFLICT. SUCCESS AT CONFERENCE REQUIRED SERIOUS U.S. SUPPORT FOR UN RESES. "WE APPRECIATE CARTER'S EFFORTS, AND HOPE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CARTER WILL REPLY THAT THE ARABS ARE THE SOLE ONES TRYING FOR PEACE." ARABS HAVE EXPRESSED MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF MODERATION AND CAN DO NO MORE. "SITATION NOW REQUIRES PRESSING ISRAEL TO SHOW MODERATION EQUAL TO ARABS, AND NOT TO PRESSURE ARABS TO SHOW MORE MODERATION." ANY MORE PRESSURE ON ARAB GOVERNMENTS TO EXCEED CURRENT LEVEL OF MODERATION WOULD CREATE TROUBLES WITH DOMESTIC ARAB PUBLIC OPICON. DURABLE PEACE MUST NOT BE CREATED AT EXPENSE OF VICTIM. ISSUES OF WAR, AGGRESSION AND INJUSTICE MUST BE SOLVED.

6. KHADDAM CONTINUED BY DRAWING WHAT HE VIEWED AS PARALLELS BETWEEN ISRAELI POLICY AND CURRENT POLICIES OF RHODESIAN AND SOUTH AFRICAN REGIMES AND GERMANY UNDER HITLER. HE URGED ISRAEL'S FRIENDS TO RESIST MILITARY HYSTERIA. ARABS WERE NOT PESSIMISTIC ABOUT WAR, REALIZING THAT IF ISSUE SOLVED IN THIS MANNER THEY WOULD SUFFER LOSSES BUT WOULD ULTIMATELY EMERGE VICTORIOUS. HOWEVER, AS ARAFAT SAID AT UN, ARABS DO NOT WISH TO THROW ISRAELIS INTO THE SEA. ARABS AGREE WITH ARAFAT'S PUBLIC STATEMENTS THAT ISRAELIS AND ARABS SHOULD COEXIST. KHADDAM NOTED THAT, IN A STORM, "SOLID BODIES BREAK, FLEXIBLE BODIES BEND." SENATOR ASKED WHETHER ISRAELI FLEXIBILITY IN CURRENT ARAB STORM WOULD LEAD TO END OF STORM, AND KHADDAM REPLIED CATEGORICALLY, "CERTAINLY. WE WANT A JUST PEACE, AN END TO STATE OF WAR" AND RESOLUTION OF ALL ELEMENTS THAT WILL PREVENT FUTURE WARS. "I EXPRESS OUR CONVICTION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF PEACE IN THE ME. IT IS NECESSARY TO WORK TOWARD PEACE BECAUSE THE ALTERNATIVE IS NOT IN ME NOR WORLD INTEREST." KHADDAM CONCLUDED WITH FINAL REITERATION OF NEED TO GUARANTEE PALESTINIAN RIGHT TO INDEPENDENT STATE ACCORDING TO UN RESES. AND TO ENSURE COMPLETE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM ALL LANDS OCCUPIED IN 1967.

7. MEETING WITH PEOPLES' COUNCIL SPEAKER HALABI BEGAN WITH DISCUSSION OF RECENT VISIT BY THREE SYRIAN PARLIAMENTARIANS TO U.S., A VISIT WHICH SENATOR STONE AND SPEAKER HALABI LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AGREED WAS SUCCESSFUL. HALABI STATED THAT HE EXPECTED TO RECEIVE MORE INVITATIONS DURING NEXT SESSION OF PEOPLES' COUNCIL SO THAT MORE PC MEMBERS COULD VISIT U.S. HALABI SAID HE LOOKED FORWARD TO VISITS BY U.S. LEGISLATORS TO SYRIA TO EXCHANGE VIEWS AND FACILITATE ESTABLISHMENT OF PEACE. HE APPRAISED STATEMENTS BY PRESIDENT CARTER AS REFLECTIV OF POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT OF U.S. VIEWS. HOWEVER, ISRAELI ELECTION MARKED SETBACK FOR PEACE BECAUSE ELECTORATE VOTED FOR "FANATICISM, OCCUPATION AND EXPANSIONISM." ALL ISARELI PARTIES FAVOR EXPANSIONISM, AND ONLY DIFFER IN DETAILS OF HOW THEY WOULD IMPLEMENT EXPANSIONSIST POLICY. HE CLAIMED SYRIAN JEWS ENJOYED FULL RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF NON-JEWISH SYRIAN CITIZENS.

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8. HALABI SAID SYRIA WANTED PEACE BASED UPON FULL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED LANDS AND RESTORATION OF PALESTINIAN RIGHTS ACCORDING TO US RESES. EVEN IF THESE CONDITIONS MET, HOWEVER, SYRIA WOULD NOT RECOGNIZE ISRAELI. HALABI THEN DREW UPON SOME VIGNETTES FROM HIS OWN EXPERIENCE AS A CHILD UNDER ISRAELI BOMBING AND WITH HIS OWN CHILDREN TO

UNDERLINE NEED FOR PREVENTING FUTURE CATASTROPHES. HE SPOKE OF SYRIA'S DESIRE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND BURDEN WHICH DEFENSE NEEDS PLACED UPON ECONOMY. SENATOR CONCLUDED THAT ARABS MUST DISPLAY PATIENCE IN WAGING PEACE. THEY SHOULD NOT WALK AWAY WHEN FORTHCOMING NEGOTIATIONS GET TOUCH. INCOMING ISRAELI LEADERS WOULD PROVE TO BE TOUGH NEGOTIATORS, BUT STILL THERE REMAINED CHANCE FOR SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATION OF PEACE WITH DIGNITY. ESCHEW DEADLINES, BECAUSE THEY CREATE RISKS. "WE WANT NEITHER DELAYS NOR DEADLINES. THERE WILL BE PEACE."

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9. COMMENT:

DIALOGUE WITH HALABI CONTAINED NO SURPRISES BUT DID CONTAIN SOME UNUSUAL PERSONAL TOUCHES IN HIS REFERENCES TO EFFECT OF 1948 WAR ON HIS CHILDHOOD AND THE FEAR THE 1973 BOMBINGS OF DAMASCUS CAUSED HIS DAUGHTER. KHADDAM EXPRESSED KEEN CURIOSITY ABOUT ISRAELI ELECTIONS, PROBING SENATOR FOR IMPLICATIONS OF BEGIN'S SUCCESS. FOREIGN MINISTER TOOK SPECIAL DELIGHT IN JABBING CONGRESS AS IMPEDIMENT TO CONDUCT OF U.S. POLICY IN ME, IN DESCRIBING ZIONISM AS PART OF NAZI MOVEMENT, AND IN REFERRING TO "OCCUPIED PALESTINE" AS DISTINCT FROM WEST BANK/GAZA. HE, HOWEVER, REPEATEDLY RETURNED TO THEME OF SYRIAN DESIRE FOR PEACE AND FOR NEED OF ALREADY DEMONSTRATED ARAB MODERATION TO SHOW SOME RESULTS.

10. ABOVE CLEARED WITH CODEL BEFORE DEPARTURE.
MURPHY

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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